



SUMMARY OF BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICIES

FOR CURRENT STUDENTS & FAMILIES

The Summary of Boston Public Schools (BPS) Policies summarizes many helpful laws, policies, regulations, and practices important to current students and their parents, families and guardians. It is not intended to be a complete directory of all laws and policies concerning students and parents. If you are interested in enrolling in Boston Public Schools please see our [Enrollment webpage](#) where you can find information and policies related to registration and assignment.

Federal and state laws, BPS policies, regulations, and practices at the district and school building levels are subject to change. Some information may have changed since this summary was last updated in March 2025. This guide is distributed annually to all families and is available on the BPS website.

The Summary is available in Arabic, Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. It will be translated into other languages upon request.

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Find further information and policies not listed above on the BPS Policies & Procedures: Superintendent's Circulars webpage or your school's student and family handbook.	

Who to Contact:

The Boston Public Schools encourages students and families to reach out if you have questions about any of these policies, if you would like to submit a concern or complaint, or if you need further support.

You can always reach out to your school's Main Office or School Leader. If further information is needed, families may contact the [BPS Helpline](#) by phone at 617-635-8873 or by email at helpline@bostonpublicschools.org from Monday - Friday: 8:30am-5:00pm.

If you need translation and interpretation services, contact the main office of your child/children(s) school. If your preferred language of communication is other than English, the District/School must provide you with "Essential Information" in the language you specify.

For more information on language access policies see Superintendent's [Circular FAM-08](#). More information about services can be found in the [Language Access Toolkit for Families](#).

Discipline Policies:

The Boston Public Schools deeply believes that a safe, positive, just, mutually supportive, and restorative school community fosters learning, childhood, and youth development, and reduces the need to resort to school exclusion. Addressing student conduct includes working to understand the context and systems in which the behavior manifested.

Student Rights and Responsibilities:

All Boston Public Schools Students have rights that entitle you to a free public education, and all students and parents have responsibilities as a partner! You can find a list of the rights students have as members of the Boston Public Schools community [at this link](#) or from your school. Students also have the responsibility of abiding by school and district rules. Students with disabilities (including students with IEPs and/or 504 plans, students being evaluated for a disability, and students who are suspected of having a disability but have not begun evaluation) have additional rights that can be found in [Superintendent's Circular SPE-15](#) and the [full BPS Code of Conduct](#).

There are two systems of rules and consequences within BPS. All students must abide by the Code of Conduct. All school communities have the right to create unique *school based rules*, but they must be developed and reviewed through the district's formal school based rules process. School based rules and consequences cannot supersede the BPS Code of Conduct and they cannot lead to exclusionary practices (i.e. suspension).

BPS Code of Conduct:

More information can be found in the [full BPS Code of Conduct](#).

Students and families should be aware of their due process rights if they are being considered for a BPS Code of Conduct violation, which can be found on the [due process checklist](#). Students and families have the right to disciplinary interventions before exclusion from school is considered.

Students with disabilities have additional rights outlined in [Superintendent's Circular SPE-15](#)

Possible consequences for violations may include:

- Alternative remedies (ex: mediation)
- Alternative to suspension (ex: detention)
- Suspension (in-school or out-of-school)
- Expulsion (drugs, weapons, felony convictions and assault on educational staff)

School Based Rules:

Any school based rules adopted must be developed following district wide guidance, and may not conflict with the BPS Code of Conduct. School based rules may not lead to exclusionary practices, and need to be accompanied by a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and alternative remedies to outline how rules will be enforced through supportive and restorative practices.

Possible consequences for violations of school based rules may include:

- Alternative remedies (ex: mediation)
- Alternatives to suspension (ex: detention)

Due Process & Parental Involvement:

For more information on these policies see [Superintendent Circular Sup-05](#)

Before determining disciplinary action for offenses outlined in Section 7 of the Code of Conduct, the school must explore ways to re-engage the student in the learning process through alternative remedies aligned with their schoolwide models. Before suspension, schools are required to implement/document alternative remedies in the ASPEN system. The available alternative remedies may include: (1) mediation; (2)

conflict resolution; (3) restorative justice; and (4) collaborative problem-solving. If an alternative remedy is not used, the school must record this decision in ASPEN and provide written notification to the parent/guardian/caregiver, explaining why the alternative remedy was deemed unsuitable, counterproductive, or why the student's continued presence at school would pose a serious risk of harm to others.

If the school leader chooses to move forward with considering exclusion from school, the school leader shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and their primary language of the home, or other means of communication where appropriate. Students and their families have the right to participate in a hearing regarding the incident. The notice will explain:

1. the disciplinary offense
2. the basis for the charge (ex: description of the incident)
3. the potential consequences, including the potential for suspension/expulsion and the potential length of the suspension
4. the right for the student and parent/guardian/caregiver to attend a hearing with the school leader or designee
 - a. Student has the right to dispute the charges
 - b. Student may present explanation of the alleged incident
5. the date, time, and location of the hearing
6. the right of the student and the parent/guardian/caregiver to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate
7. to proceed with a hearing without a parent/guardian/caregiver present, the school leader must make effort to contact the parent/guardian/caregiver in writing
8. A student's right to make academic progress
9. The right to appeal a suspension decision to the Superintendent's designee
10. The right to appeal an expulsion decision to the Superintendent

Note: If the student is subject to emergency removal, the hearing will follow the emergency removal process. See the "Emergency Removal" section of the [Code of Conduct](#) for more information.

Anti-Bullying Policy:

For more information on the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, see Superintendent Circular [SSS-18](#)

- Bullying is defined as being repeated, intentional, and involves a power imbalance, or perceived power imbalance. This may be committed by one or more students or any member of school staff in a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture directed at a target.
- Schools are responsible for investigating incidents that occur during and after school, on weekends and on school and summer breaks.

If you believe that your child has been a target of bullying or retaliation you can reach out to a trusted adult at your child's school, file a bullying report [here](#) or call the Bullying Hotline at 617-592-2378.

Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy:

For more information on these policies see the [“Equity” section of the Superintendent’s Circulars](#).

The Boston Public Schools, in accordance with its nondiscrimination policies, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, criminal record, physical or mental disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, homelessness, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, genetics, natural or protective hairstyle, military status, immigration status, English language proficiency, or any other factor prohibited by law in its programs and activities. BPS does not tolerate any form of retaliation, or bias-based intimidation, threat or harassment that demeans individuals’ dignity or interferes with their ability to work or learn.

The BPS Office of Civil Rights investigates all allegations of discrimination, harassment, bias or retaliation. In the case of sexual misconduct, investigations are referred to the Title IX Coordinator to determine how the investigation will proceed. Harassment, including sexual harassment, is any unwelcome behavior that creates a hostile or intimidating environment for the victim. All investigations will ensure a prompt response and be resolved in a timely manner.

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex (gender). It states: No person in the US shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance

At the time of publication, Jose Lopez is the acting Director of Compliance and Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator can be contacted at titleIX@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-9650. Up to date information can be found on this [webpage](#).

How to Report: If you or your student have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or a bias-based or sexual misconduct incident, you or your student may report directly to a trusted school staff member, or you may file a confidential report via phone or email to the Office of Civil Rights at 617-635-9650 or via email at ocr@bostonpublicschools.org

Academic Policies:

BPS is committed to ensuring that every graduate is a lifelong learner, a productive worker, a responsible citizen, and a thoughtful participant in our diverse communities. The academic policies define and reinforce both student and adult responsibilities that support students in meeting these expectations.

Attendance Policies: For more information on this policy, see [Superintendent Circular ACA-18](#).

- Call the school by 10am each day if your student will miss school for any reason.
- Absences will be excused at the review of the school team and a note must be provided to the school within 7 days of the absence.
- Students with excessive absences or tardies, defined as 18 or more across a full school year, may be required to participate in a collaborative success plan to improve their attendance.

Grading Policy: For more information on this policy see [Superintendent Circular CAO-08](#).

Promotion Policy: For more information on this policy see [Superintendent Circular CAO-01](#).

Academic Support Services: For more information on special services see each section linked below.

- Counseling: Refer to [Superintendent's Circular SPE-14](#).
- Special Education Services: Refer to [the BPS Family Guide for Students with Disabilities](#) which was designed to help families understand the special

education process and their role as valued team members. This guide includes information about how to request evaluation for special education services and supports available to students with 504 plans.

- If you would like to request a referral for an educational evaluation to determine if your student has a disability you can contact the Coordinator of Special Education (COSE) at your school.
 - At the time of publication, the district's Section 504 Coordinator is Olga Garriga, Deputy Chief of Services and Accountability in the Office of Specialized Services.
 - Multilingual Learner Services: Refer to [Superintendent's Circular CAO-05](#). This guide includes information about the types of services available to multilingual learners in the district and more regarding the rights, notifications, and supports available to multilingual learners and their families.
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Safety Procedures:

For more information on these policies and other emergency procedures can be found in the ["Fire Safety and Emergency Management" section of the Superintendent's Circulars](#).

- Each school will finalize a safety plan and conduct fire drills and safe mode drills regularly as required by law.
 - Families/Caregivers can expect communication on any emergency or safety concerns via ParentSquare.
 - BPS welcomes all families' and visitors to our schools. All members of the school community are asked to abide by the [school visitor guidelines](#) and [school access control](#) policies for the safety of our students, families, and staff.
 - Your child's school will have additional information specific to the building.
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Technology Usage Policy:

For more information on these policies see [Superintendent Circular OIIT-01](#).

- The [Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\)](#) outlines responsible use and prohibited activities when using all technology (networks, electronic devices, and online resources) regardless of if this is on a personal device.

- Every student is expected to follow all of the rules and conditions listed in the AUP and the school based rules and regulations in the Code of Conduct that relate to use of technology.
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Family Communication and Engagement:

For guidance on how to contact the district about questions or concerns, and information on language access, please see [page 3](#) of this summary.

Opportunities for Shared Decision Making and Advisory Roles

School Site Councils: For more information of School Site Councils (SSCs), see [Superintendent's Circular FAM-02](#)

- Each BPS school is required by MA law to have a School Site Council (SSC). The role of the School Site Council is to engage parents and teachers to serve with the school leader as the decision-making body of the school.

School Parent Councils: For more information of School Parent Councils (SPCs), see [Superintendent's Circular FAM-01](#)

- Parents are elected to the SSC via the School Parent Council (SPC). SPCs provide an opportunity for families to be more deeply engaged at the school level, partnering with the school leader to improve school culture.
- All parents or legal guardians of a child attending a particular school are automatically members of that school's SPC.

In addition to the school-based SPC, there are district wide parent advisory councils that bring together parents across schools to serve as advisors to district leadership.

- Citywide Parent Council (CPC) is the district-wide voice for parents and is composed of representatives from each school.
- [The Special Education Parent Advisory Council \(SpEdPAC\)](#) represents the families of students with disabilities who receive special education services. Districts are required to establish a SpEdPAC by MA law.
- [The District English Learner Advisory Committee \(DELAC\)](#) works to ensure that parents are informed about all aspects of BPS that affect English learners and provide recommendations to the Office of Multicultural and Multilingual Education

If you are interested in joining your school's Parent Council or Site Council, please reach out to your child's school. Each SPC can elect representatives for each of the district advisory councils.

Title I Engagement Requirements

For more information on Title I Engagement policies see [Superintendent's Circular FAM-05](#)

All schools receiving federal Title I Funds are required to do the following related to family engagement:

1. Have a written Family Engagement Plan/Policy
2. Have a Home-School Compact: For more information see [Superintendent's Circular FAM-07](#)
 - This is a written commitment indicating how all members of a school community — families, educators, and students- to agree to share responsibility for student learning.
3. Set aside a minimum of 1% of Title I allocation in the school's budget for family engagement to be developed or decided in collaboration with parents and approved by the School Parent Council and School Site Council or Governing Board.

Schools are required to:

4. Host an annual parent meeting to discuss school priorities and programs under Title I by October 31.
5. Build capacity of both families and teachers to effectively engage with one another to improve student learning

School Cancellation:

For more information on this policy see [Superintendent Circular LGL-07](#).

On occasion, the BPS may need to close school because of bad weather or an emergency situation. We communicate cancellation information in the following ways:

- ParentSquare notifications
- The BPS Website
- Press and Media Reports

If bad weather develops during the school day, dismissal will be at the regular time. If schools are closed, all after-school programs in BPS, BPS athletic events, and

evening classes and events are also cancelled. In the event of a school cancellation, the missed day will be made up at the end of the school year in order to comply with state law that the school year for students must be 180 days. If necessary, we will adjust the BPS calendar and you will receive information from your child's school.

Student Records:

For more information on this policy see [Superintendent Circular LGL-07](#).

The Boston Public Schools maintains student records for all students in line with the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and with relevant state law.

- Transcripts, or permanent records, include the student's name, date of birth, address, years and grades completed, and courses and grades earned. This information is kept on file for 60 years after the student has left the school system.
 - Temporary records include other information and will be destroyed seven years after the student leaves the system, upon written notification to the student or parent/guardian.
 - Students and custodial parents have the right to inspect or copy their student's records, to request an amendment of the record, and to appeal their request. Authorized school staff also have access to student records when it is necessary to perform their duties. Non-custodial parents may also request access to a student's record in some circumstances. For more information on these rights and processes, see [Superintendent Circular LGL-07](#).
 - Unless the parent or eligible student has previously indicated in writing their disapproval of the release of such information, the school may release the following directory information: student's name, age, grade level, and dates of enrollment. Schools may also share information as requested with certain state agencies or in the case of a subpoena. Certain third parties, including military recruiters, higher education institutions, charter schools, or other schools, may request directory information for enrolled students. Parents or students may opt out of sharing their information in certain cases in writing by completing the [Student Information Update form](#) by September 30 of each year. For more information, see [Superintendent Circular LGL-10](#)
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Transportation:

Transportation Eligibility: For more information, visit the [Transportation website](#). BPS students in grades K-6 are eligible for BPS yellow bus transportation if they attend a school within their home base and meet the mileage requirements. If your child is eligible for a school bus, we will send a notice before school starts with their bus stop location, pick-up and drop-off time, and bus numbers. Parents will be notified if this information changes, and current transportation assignments can be accessed on Zum.

Students in grades 7-12 use MBTA buses and subways for transportation service and receive a free monthly seven-day MBTA pass to use this service. Each school is provided passes and distributes them to all their eligible students on the first day of school. It is recommended that students receive travel training to and from school prior to the first day of attendance. Students in grade 6 may also opt-in to receive MBTA service instead of a yellow bus, provided they are eligible for yellow bus service. Students in grades K0-5 may not receive MBTA passes.

For schools that are not easily accessible by the MBTA, BPS may offer yellow bus shuttle service between an MBTA hub and the school. The BPS Department of Transportation and the MBTA decides which schools might receive this service.

Parents may request a variety of changes to their child's transportation assignment through our Support Portal by opening a new support ticket. Please note that requests are not guaranteed approval. If approved, requests do not carry over to the following school year and need to be resubmitted. All requests received before the first Friday in August will receive a response before the start of school. Requests received after the first Friday in August and in September may take several additional weeks to process and may not be in effect for the first day of school. Requests during the year may take 2-3 weeks to process.

Special Education Transportation: For more information, visit the [Special Education website](#).

BPS Transportation provides specialized transportation services for students with disabilities in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Some students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans may also be picked up and dropped off at a corner stop, receive an MBTA pass, or walk to school.

Transportation Policies: For more information, visit the [Transportation website](#).

On the BPS Transportation website, families can find our full policies and guidance around the following topics:

- Rights and Responsibilities of students, families, and bus drivers/monitors, created with the goal of ensuring safety for all bus riders and effectiveness of the transportation system.
 - Note that the school bus is considered an extension of the classroom, and all BPS Code of Conduct and School-Based Rules remain the same. For more information about Transportation and Student Discipline, visit [Superintendent's Circular TRN-02](#).
- AM Pick Up Policy: Students are expected to be at their designated bus stop 10 minutes before its scheduled arrival time and must be visible to the driver.
- PM Drop Off Policy: Students with door-to-door service must have a parent/guardian present in order to be dropped off. Students with corner bus stops may get off the bus without a parent/guardian present if they are comfortable.

Zum: We encourage BPS families and caregivers to download the Zūm App for parents to track rides at app.ridezum.com. The first time parents login they will be asked to verify their credentials by answering a few simple questions about their student (e.g. what school they attend, what street they live on). Parents/guardians cannot edit contact information and/or login details directly on the Zum App - they must update their information through a BPS Welcome Center. If you experience any trouble using the site or have questions about your login information, please contact us by email or at our Transportation Hotline, and we will help resolve the issue.

Contacting BPS Transportation:

- Support Portal: bostonpublicschoolshelp.freshdesk.com/support/home This is the best channel to communicate any non-urgent questions or concerns. You will receive a response to your ticket within 7-10 days, if not sooner.
- Transportation Hotline: Call [617-635-9520](tel:617-635-9520) from 6 am-7 pm on school days. In addition, the hotline is open for limited hours on school vacations.
- Email: Email schoolbus@bostonpublicschools.org and you will receive a response within 2-3 school days.

Annual Notices:

Boston Public Schools is required to notify families of certain laws, policies, and rights each year. See below to learn more about each one.

Annual Notice	Description	Link to full policy
Anti-Hazing	Hazing is not permitted at Boston Public Schools.	LGL-01 Anti-Hazing
Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)	Each school building has an AHERA Management Plan, and the BPS Environmental Division updates them regularly.	Located in the Main Office of each school building
Human Sexuality Education	Parents/guardians of students who receive human sexuality education will be notified and may choose to opt out of said curriculum.	HWD-05 Human Sexuality Education
Immunization Policy	All students must provide proof of immunizations to enroll at Boston Public Schools or provide a religious/medical exemption annually.	SHS-06 Immunization Law
Title I: Highly Qualified Teachers	All families have a right to request information about their teachers' qualifications. In addition, all families with students enrolled in Title I schools will receive a notice when their student has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet state licensure requirements. This is usually sent in the Fall.	"Right-To-Know": Teacher Not Meeting State Licensure Requirements
Title I: School Report Cards	All families will receive a notice of their school's report card about their school and district performance. Report cards help families see where schools and districts are succeeding and where there is still work to do.	Report Cards Flyer
Vehicle Idling Policy	No cars or buses may idle on school grounds. Violations will be addressed via the Code of Conduct.	See Massachusetts General Law 37H and full BPS Code of Conduct
Wellness Policy	<p>Information regarding the district's efforts to maintain a healthy school environment, including physical education, health and sex education, health services, participation in the National School Lunch program.</p> <p>In particular, families should be aware of BPS's nutrition policy guidelines and that all BPS</p>	HWD-01 Wellness Policy

	students are eligible for free breakfast, lunch, after school meals, and summer meals.	
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Further Information:

More information and policies can be found as below:

- In your school's student and family handbook: Each school has their own handbook, which will be distributed at the beginning of the year. Reach out to your school's main office or School Leader for a copy. Contents may vary by school. Examples of contents you may find include:
 - School motto, mission, vision, and/or core values
 - Staff Directory and Communication protocols
 - School Based Rules, including student rights and responsibilities
 - Dress code
 - School Daily Schedule
 - School specific protocols, such as entrance, arrival, and dismissal procedures
 - Further academic policies, including progress report and report card schedules, grading and homework policies, credit recovery opportunities, etc.
 - Extracurricular opportunities, including clubs and sports
 - School specific resources
- Superintendent's Circulars: Additional circulars are available on the [BPS website](#).